

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 EUR-12 SAM-01 /100 W

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R 281450Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3573

INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 0756

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, BR

SUBJECT: CONTINUING REACTION TO BRAZIL'S VOTE ON ZIONISM

REFS: A. BRASILIA 0460, B. 75 BRASILIA 10410

SUMMARY: HOTEL CONCESSIONS BY U.S. TOURISTS BOYCOTTING BRAZIL FOR THE ZIONISM VOTE HAVE HAD LITTLE ECONOMIC IMPACT BUT THEY HELPED KEEP ALIVE IN BRAZILIAN MEDIA FEARS OF REPRISALS FOR UNGA VOTE. LEADERS OF BRAZILIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY HAVE APPEALED TO U.S. GROUPS FOR END TO BOYCOTT. STILL UNDER OCCASIONAL CRITICISM FOR VOTE--AND FOR SERIES OF RECENT CONTROVERSIAL ACTIONS--, FOREIGN MINISTRY APPEARS DETERMINED TO STICK BY ITS INITIAL DECISION AND APPARENTLY FEELS THAT WORST IS OVER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESIDENT OF EMBRATUR, THE BRAZILIAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION, SHID FARHAT COMMENTED IN A PRESS INTERVIEW, 6 JANUARY 1976, PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF U.S. SENATOR JACOB JAVITS, THAT APPROXIMATELY TWO THOUSAND RESERVATIONS IN RIO HOTELS HAD BEEN CANCELLED BY
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INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN JEWS OR U.S. TOURIST AGENCIES CONTROLLED

BY JEWS IN REPRISAL FOR THE BRAZILIAN VOTE IN THE UN CONDEMNING ZIONISM "AS A FORM OF RACISM". FARHAT NOTED THAT BRAZIL AND MEXICO HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS TARGETS FOR REPRISAL BECAUSE OF THEIR UN VOTE. DURING SAME PERIOD, JORNAL DO BRASIL REPORTED THAT SOURCES IN ITAMARATY DIVULGED THAT THE MINISTRY HAD RECEIVED A STREAM OF LETTERS PROTESTING THE BRAZILIAN VOTE BY JEWS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD "ESPECIALLY NORTH AMERICANS". THE LONGEVITY AND PERSISTENCE OF THE ISSUE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, WAS NOTED BY ONE UNNAMED ITAMARATY DIPLOMAT, ALTHOUGH OTHERS IN THE MINISTRY WERE CITED AS BELIEVING THAT THE BOYCOTT IS A MOMENTARY, EMOTIONAL REACTION SINCE BRAZIL IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES WHERE JEWS ARE WELL TREATED AND SUFFER LESS DISCRIMINATION.

2. THE FINANCIAL LOSSES GENERATED BY THE CANCELLATION OF HOTEL SPACE HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY RESTRICTED TO RIO DE JANEIRO AND THE HOTEL SHERATON (ITT) IS AMONG THE WORST HIT. THE SHERATON REPORTED IT RECEIVED MORE THAN 1,250 CANCELLATIONS AND RIO'S INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL (PAN AM) MORE THAN 500 CANCELLATIONS, REPORTED THE DIARIO DE COMERCIO E INDUSTRIA. THE LETTERS INFORMING THE HOTELS OF THE CANCELLATIONS ALL CITE THE UN VOTE AS THE REASON FOR NOT TRAVELING TO BRAZIL. THE DIARIO DO COMERCIO E INDUSTRIA OBSERVED THAT UNTIL NOW THE RASH OF CANCELLATIONS HAS COME ONLY FROM U.S. AGENCIES AND THE MOVEMENT HAS NOT SPREAD TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND EUROPE.

3. SAO PAULO, SALVADOR, AND RECIFE HOTELS, ACCORDING TO THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO, HAVE BEEN UNAFFECTED BY THE TOURIST BOYCOTT.

4. ON JANUARY 14 O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO REPORTED THAT THE BRAZILIAN B'NAI B'RITH HAD ASKED THE NORTH AMERICAN BRANCH TO SUSPEND THE TOURIST BOYCOTT AGAINST BRAZIL. THE ORGANIZATION'S PRESIDENT, JACOB PRIST, WAS REPORTED TO BE IN WASHINGTON TO CONVEY THE MESSAGE THAT THE U.S. POSITION WAS NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE THINKING OF THE BRAZILIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. AS EXPLAINED TO THE PRESS BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR B'NAI B'RITH OF BRAZIL, THE BRAZILIAN UN VOTE WAS A "PRAGMATIC POSITION OF THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT AND DOES NOT

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REFLECT ON THE SITUATION OF JEWS IN BRAZIL". HE WENT ON TO CLARIFY THE VOTE AS "NOT AN ANTI-JEWISH POSTURE BUT ONLY A POLICY THOUGHT CONVENIENT AT THE TIME".

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5. IN EARLY JANUARY, ISRAELI EMBASSY MINISTER COUNSELOR (SARFATY) TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE EXPECTED NO STRONG, COORDINATED CAMPAIGN OF REPRISALS AGAINST BRAZIL BY U.S. OR WORLD JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS COMPARABLE TO THAT CONDUCTED AGAINST MEXICO. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, HE EXPLAINED THAT BRAZILIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IS WELL INTEGRATED, VERY CONSCIOUS OF ITS "BRAZILIANNES" AND ONLY MIDLY ZIONIST. HE CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE BRAZILIAN JEWISH LEADERS, WHO CONFERRED WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL IN DECEMBER (REF B), HAVE BEEN SATISFIED WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE TIME. ACCORDING TO SARFATY, PRESIDENT ASSURED JEWISH LADERS ON TW POINTS: 1) THAT BRAZIL'S VOTE AT THE UN WAS NOT ANTI-SEMITIC IN INTENT NOR DID IT SIGNAL ANY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT'S LONG-STANDING POLICY OF COMPLETE OPPOSITION TO ANTI-SEMITISM IN ANY FORM; 2) THAT BRAZILIAN POSITION WOULD NOT RESULT IN CURBS ON ZIONIST ACTIVITIES WITHIN BRAZIL. IN LATTER RESPECT, SARFATY NOTED THAT JEWISH LEADERS REASONED QUITE LOGICALLY THAT SINCE GOB HAD JUDGED ZIONISM TO BE RACISM, AND SINCE BRAZIL PROHIBITS RACISM BY LAW AND PRACTICE, THEN ZIONIST

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ACTIVITIES MIGHT BECOME SUBJECT TO LEGAL RESTRICTIONS. SARFATY WENT ON TO SAY THAT, ACCORDING TO JEWISH LEADERS, GEISEL IN EFFECT ADMITTED THAT THE VOTE HAD BEEN A MISTAKE.

6. COMMENT: TOURIST CANCELLATIONS, WHICH APPEAR NOW TO HAVE BEEN SCATTERED AND OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE IN BROADER ECONOMIC PICTURE, ONLY SERVE TO REVIVE WANING FEARS EXPRESSED IN BRAZILIAN MEDIA THAT SOME FORM OF REPRISAL MAY BE TAKEN FOR ZIONISM VOTE BY WORLD JEWISH GROUPS, OR BY "INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CIRCLES". THIS CONCERN WAS REFLECTED IN SOME QUESTIONS ASKED SENATOR JAVITS BY PRESS DURING HIS VISIT HERE JANUARY 7 AND 8.

7. WHILE ZIONISM VOTE IS STILL AN OCCASIONAL SUB-THEME IN CONTINUING PRESS ASSAULTS ON FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA AND HIS FOREIGN POLICIES, INDICATIONS ARE THAT ITAMARATY IS STILL DETERMINED TO STAND FIRM AND PROBABLY FEELS THAT THE WORST IS OVER, THOUGH THE ISSUE MAY COME UP AGAIN WHEN SILVEIRA APPEARS IN CONGRESS TO EXPLAIN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER IT RECONVENES IN MARCH. WHILE IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED HERE THAT MEXICO IS MORE VULNERABLE ECONOMICALLY TO US BOYCOTTS, SILVEIRA TOLD JAVITS THAT BRAZIL WOULD NEVER BACKTRACK ON ZIONISM ISSUE AS MEXICO HAS, WHICH ACTION HE SAW AS GIVING MEXICO "REASON TO BE ASHAMED".

8. PUBLIC IMPRESSION IS THAT BRAZIL MANAGED TO BE ABSENT WHEN SUBSEQUENT VOTE ON ZIONISM WAS TAKEN AT UNESCO MEETING IN PARIS IN DECEMBER AND THAT THIS WAS IN EFFECT A WITHDRAWAL TO A LESS CONTROVERSIAL POSITION. CHIEF OF FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPARTMENT

RESPONSIBLE FOR MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT BRAZIL WAS NOT "ABSENT" FOR UNESCO VOTE AT PARIS BUT SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE RIGHT TO VOTE AT THAT PARTICULAR MEETING. IF IT HAS VOTED, HE CONTINUED, IT MOST CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE VOTED AGAIN TO CONDEMN ZIONISM AS RACISM. INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THIS EXPLANATION CONFLICTS WITH EXPLANATION OF BRAZIL'S ABSENCE AT PARIS MEETING GIVEN SENATOR JAVITS BY GENERAL GOLBERY, AND SEEMS TO BE AT VARIANCE WITH IMPRESSION OBTAINED BY JEWISH LEADERS THAT GEISEL HIMSELF FELT THAT UNGA VOTE HAD BEEN A MISTAKE.

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